

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

INSIDE
TRACKS

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New Warden Team Works for Hunters and Anglers

A new wildlife law enforcement team is at work in Lincoln County.

FWP Wardens Ron Jendro and Chris Ralph, both graduates of Montana State University and both in their 20s, have combined their energies to uphold fishing and hunting regulations across the hundreds of square miles of Montana's northwest corner.

Jendro and Ralph have replaced wardens Mack Long and Mike Mehn, who have moved to positions in Missoula and Dillon. Jendro covers the Troy/Yaak/Bull River area and Ralph patrols the Area south and east of Libby.

The new wardens have recognized the huge task which lies before them with such a large district, and they've approached it with enthusiasm and an emphasis on teamwork.



NEW TEAM. Wardens Ron Jendro (left) and Chris Ralph have combined their energy and enthusiasm to enforce wildlife laws in Lincoln County.

"We enjoy working together," said Jendro, a Chinook native. "We talk to each other every day and we each know where the other is going. That's the most efficient and safest way to go."

Both wardens emphasize that the majority of hunters and anglers are law abiding and ethical.

"Hunters and anglers pay our salaries," noted Ralph, who grew up near Post Falls, Idaho. "We work for them and we're out to reduce poaching."

One common concern of landowners is the spotlighting and shooting of wildlife.

"We've focused our decoy effort on areas where we've had poaching problems year after year," said Jendro. He noted that these decoy animals are used mostly after dark and usually on private land, in situations where no law-abiding hunters would consider shooting.

In one area this year after repeated problems and requests by the landowner, Jendro and Ralph set up a deer decoy one night and sat back to wait. Of the people who drove by, several stopped and shined their lights on the decoy. Finally, a small pickup truck stopped and a man jumped out and shot the decoy.

"His wife, who was in the pickup

with him, told him not to shoot," said Jendro who approached the car and took the man aside after the man shot the decoy. "His biggest fear

after I gave him the ticket was having to get back in his car and face his wife and his kid, who was also in the car."

Later that night, another man jammed on his brakes, jumped out and shot the decoy, then sped away in his car. Ralph pursued that man and issued him a ticket as well.

On another interesting case, a hunter reported seeing someone shoot a turkey in an area where no turkey season is in effect. Based on information they received, Jendro and Ralph were able to locate the man.

"When we interviewed him he tried to deny it at first," said Jendro. "Then he admitted he did it, but said he thought it was a blue grouse. He received a ticket."

Another important aspect of a warden's work is caring for wildlife in trouble. Recently, Jendro responded to a call regarding a trapped moose calf.

"The calf got all twisted up, trying to walk over a barbed wire fence right along Highway 2," said Jendro. "The cow moose was there, all excited, running along the highway. I snipped the wires, the calf jumped the fence, rejoined the cow, and they both ran away. Those are the kinds of things that really make the job worthwhile."

IN THIS ISSUE

- **NEW WARDEN TEAM WORKS FOR HUNTERS AND ANGLERS**
- **COMMUNITY COMES THROUGH FOR HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM**
- **FROM THE COMMISSIONER**
- **INTERNS REFURBISH AREA PARKS**
- **KOKANEE EGG TAKE EXCEEDS GOAL**
- **THANKS TO EASTERN SANDERS CO. SPORTSMEN**
- **HUNTER FOCUS GROUP PROJECT COMPLETED**



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PLEASE HELP YOURSELF

Community Comes through for Hunter Ed. Program

The Kalispell Area Hunter Education Program just keeps getting better.

Thanks to generous contributions by Kalispell area businesses and individuals, the area's Hunter Education program was able to purchase .22 caliber rifles for student use. The live-firing program is now one of the best in the state.

"These rifles have been a tremendous addition to our program," said Kalispell Area Lead Instructor Dan Atkinson. "Live firing gives the students a realistic experience that you can't duplicate in any other way."

Atkinson, instructors Heather Pier, Wayne Stevens and others solicited donations on behalf of the program. "It was really great how the community came through for the Hunter Education Program," said Atkinson. He added that the Flathead Valley Clay Target Club and the Northwest Montana Arms Collectors Association make the live firing possible by donating the use of their building and grounds north of Kalispell.

The indoor .22 caliber live firing station is part of the hands-on field portion of the Hunter Education Course. Other stations include gun handling, hunting skills, water safety, black powder, and bow and arrow. In total, each student receives 4 hours of field instruction and 14 hours of classroom instruction.

In Fall, 1994, about 300 students completed the field course in one day, requiring 30 Hunter Education Instructors. These students included the Kalispell class, Bigfork class, and the Kalispell adult class. This is the second year for the adult class and it is proving to be very popular.

Atkinson and the 30 Kalispell area instructors contributed more than 2,000 volunteer hours in fund raising, preparing for and teaching the fall course.

In another gesture of support for the program, Snappy's presented a compass to all graduating students; K-MART gave each student a big game bag. Atkinson said that this practice was enthusiastically received by the students and

one he hopes will expand and continue.

On behalf of all Montana Hunters, FWP extends heartfelt thanks to all Hunter Education Instructors and community supporters! 🦋



CLASSWORK. Kalispell area Lead Instructor Dan Atkinson (left), Instructor Wayne Stevens (far right), and the fall, 1994 adult Hunter Education Class.



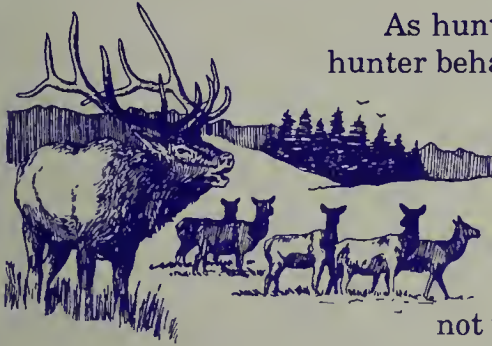
ONE OF THE BEST programs in the state, this live firing practice for students is supervised by Hunter Education Rangemaster Wayne Stevens, and instructors Dale Pier, April Kelly, Marty Fregerio, and Jean Kelly.

Contributors to the Kalispell Area Hunter Education Program

Snappy's Sport Center
Kalispell Army Navy Store
F.H. Stolze Land and Lumber
K-MART Sporting Goods Department
Montana Power Company
Wooden Nickel Pawn
Evergreen Disposal, Inc.
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Columbia Falls Aluminum Company
Sportsman and Ski Haus
Fred's Family Restaurant
Premier Video
Summit Financial
City Service
Family Health Care, PC
Northwest Montana Arms Collectors
Flathead Valley Clay Target Club

and many generous contributions
from parents, students and others.

Charlie Decker Stresses Importance of Ethics



As hunters, we hear more and more about the importance of ethics and responsible hunter behavior.

I feel strongly that the future of hunting is in the hunter's hands. If hunters don't police their ranks, I think hunting opportunity for all of us is in jeopardy.

During this past hunting season, I observed several things that really disturbed me. I know that the vast majority of hunters are responsible and ethical, but there are exceptions and we can no longer tolerate them.

I found one bull moose shot and left with only the horns taken. I saw hunters not respecting road gates and road use guidelines, and I've heard of some hunters who shot too close to homes.

The following, "A Hunter's Pledge" is taken from the Winter, 1995 edition of "Bugle" Magazine. Please read it, and follow it:

A Hunter's Pledge

Responsible hunting provides unique challenges and rewards. However, the future of the sport depends on each hunter's behavior and ethics. Therefore, as a hunter, I pledge to:

Respect the environment and wildlife.

- Show respect for the wildlife you hunt by taking only clean, killing shots, then retrieving and properly handling your game. Take only what you will use, even if it is under the legal limit.
- Learn to tread lightly while afield. Use vehicles only on established roads and trails, practice low-impact camping and travel, and pack out your trash, including cigarette butts and spent shell casings.
- Report illegal activities immediately.

Respect property and landowners.

- Always get permission to hunt on private land.
- Close any gates you open, and never damage crops or property, including fences, outbuildings and livestock.
- Alert landowners or land managers about any problems you find on their property.
- Share your game with the landowner, or say thank you in some other way.

Show consideration for nonhunters.

- Remember that the future of hunting depends on hunters and nonhunters alike. Be considerate of nonhunters' sensibilities, and strive to leave them with positive images of hunting and hunters.
- Don't flaunt your kill. Treat game carcasses in an inoffensive manner, particularly during transport.
- Be considerate of all outdoor users, including other hunters.

Hunt safely.

- Exercise caution at all times.
- Fire your gun or bow only when you are absolutely sure of your target and its background. Use binoculars, not your rifle scope, to identify your target.
- Wear hunter orange whenever appropriate or required afield.
- Remember that hunting and alcohol don't mix.

Know and obey the law.

- Obtain proper tags and licenses.

- Hunt only in allowed areas and during designated times and seasons. Read hunting regulations carefully.
- Obey bag and possession limits.
- Use only legal hunting methods and equipment.

Support wildlife and habitat conservation.

- Provide hands-on and financial support for conservation of game and nongame species and their habitats.
- Learn more about wildlife and habitat issues, and urge policymakers to support strong conservation initiatives.
- Become involved in wildlife conservation organizations and their programs.
- Purchase state and federal wildlife conservation stamps, even if such stamps are not required for hunting.

Pass on an ethical hunting tradition.

- Invite a young person or a nonhunter next time you go afield to scout or hunt.
- Attend a hunter education course, and urge others to do the same.
- Set high ethical standards for future generations of hunters to help ensure hunting will continue.

Strive to improve outdoor skills and understanding of wildlife.

- Know the limitations of your skills and equipment, and hunt within those limits.
- Improve your outdoor skills to become more observant, a better hunter and a better teacher.
- Sight in your firearm and bow, and practice shooting to ensure a clean kill in the field.
- Learn more about the habits and habitats of game and nongame wildlife and their management needs.

Hunt only with ethical hunters.

- Take pride in being an ethical hunter.
- Insist that your hunting partners behave in a responsible, ethical manner.
- Compete only with yourself.

By following these principles of conduct each time I go afield, I will give my best to the sport, the public, the environment and myself. The responsibility to hunt ethically is mine; the future of hunting depends on me.

THANKS!

The Eastern Sanders County Sportsmen Club hosted a hunter responsibility workshop in October that proved to be a great success. More than 30 people, ages 12 to 75, attended and enjoyed films, great discussions about Montana's hunting heritage, and refreshments. FWP extends our thanks to club president Jean Union and all the club members that made the evening possible.

HUNTER FOCUS GROUP PROJECT COMPLETED

Orion Institute Executive Director Jim Posewitz and Facilitator Ginny Tribe have completed their report on the Hunter Focus Group Project conducted in October. The report outlines hunters' assessments of FWP programs and suggestions for improvements. Look for a complete analysis of results and a discussion of how they will be used in the March/April Edition of "Inside Tracks."

Interns Refurbish Area Parks

State Parks in the Flathead Valley are in better shape thanks to the efforts of Interns working in the Montana Peaks Job Program. The program is administered through the state Human Services Department, with FWP as a cooperator.

"It's been a really good experience," said Sandy Gikiere, one of the interns from Whitefish. "We've learned a lot of different skills, like using special epoxy paints while wearing respirators."

Jill Nelson, one of the rotating supervisors stationed at the Flathead County Office of the state Human Services, called the project a total community effort. She said the Nurturing Center provided day care for children of the interns and the Peaks program hosted a picnic at the end of the project.

The interns repainted Whitefish Lake State Park facilities, refurbished the Lone Pine State Park picnic area,

and pulled noxious weeds at various sites. The work spanned an eight week period during the summer.

"The parks never would have received these improvements without this program," said FWP Region One Parks Manager Dave Conklin.



IMPROVING THE PARKS. FWP Intern Bernie Onsager (left), Program Interns May Sirucek and Sandy Gikiere, and Supervisor Jill Nelson take a break from their work at the Lone Pine State Park picnic area.

Kokanee Egg Take Exceeds Goal

The 1994 kokanee egg take in the Flathead Basin now stands at about 5 million, exceeding the goal of 4 million set by FWP and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

More than half the eggs originated from the "captive brood stock", fish held in the Creston National Fish

Hatchery until they matured. These eggs and eggs obtained from Wyoming are being held in the federal hatchery. The remainder of the eggs, held in the FWP Flathead Lake Hatchery, were taken mostly from kokanee in Swan Lake.

About one million fry originating

from these eggs will be held over to next winter and released in Flathead Lake as yearlings.

The rest of the fry from these eggs will be stocked in area lakes this spring. The fish stocking effort is part of the Hungry Horse Fisheries Mitigation Program.

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